

BEYOND THE ROAD'S END

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WARREN CHAPMAN

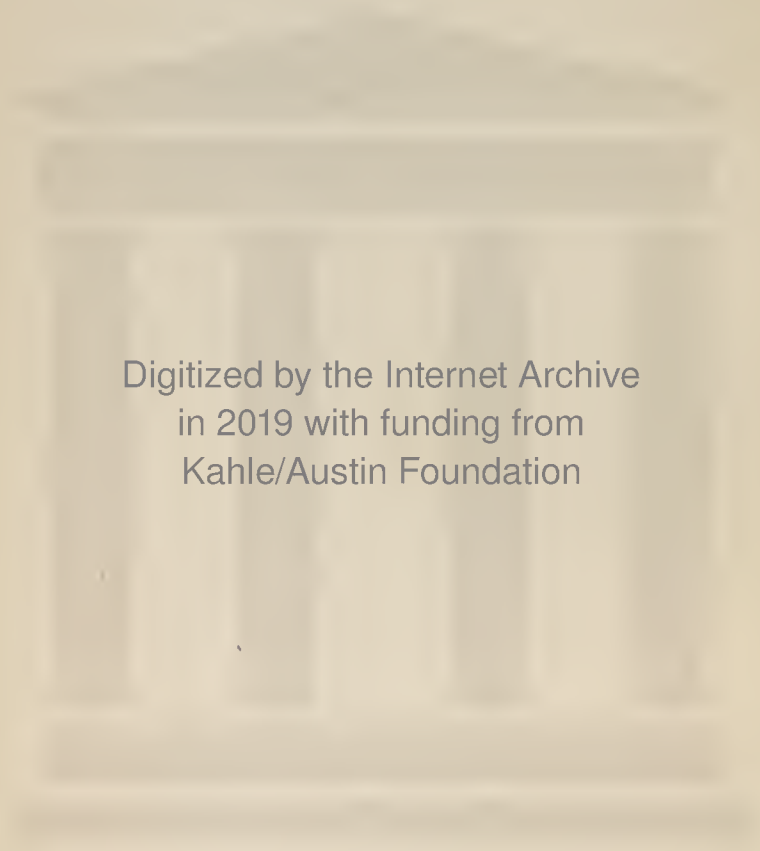
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BEYOND THE ROAD'S END



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BEYOND THE ROAD'S END

By
WARWICK CHIPMAN



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To
MY WIFE

273594

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HYMN TO THE SPIRIT

SPIRIT of God, whose breath
Down all the capes of chaos poured
Action and life and death,

And from their leash let slip
The radiance of the molten clouds
To praise Thee heart and lip,

Up shot the Sun, the World
Dropped off like fruit, and all the Stars
Had rapture to be hurled,

O Thou whose joyful choice
Made of this windy World the lyre
Of Thy prophetic voice,

When in our morning dim
Thou didst the uptoiling brute befriend
And breathe Thy soul on him,

It was Thyself that trod
Thenceforward with man's bleeding feet,
Thou brooding thought of God;

HYMN TO THE SPIRIT

Thy patience filled his rest,
Thou breath of every better thing
Till man desire the best,

Else had there been no Sun,
No wrathful earth, no perilous dooms,
No tears, and nothing done,

But God disdained the length
Of weary sweetness, hoping naught,
And peace unwinged of strength.

Something achieved He sought,
Yea, imperfection, if thereby
Perfection might be wrought.

So time began, and space
Enwrapt Thy soul, and mystery
Had pain for dwelling place.

But Thou, oh, how Thy tears,
More terrible than man's, were wept
Upon the piercing years!

That wilderness to be
Transfixed Thy dream, whose body bled
A thousand deaths in Thee.

Imagined, lifted high,
And still impossibly good, and still
Inevitably to die!

HYMN TO THE SPIRIT

But Thou didst bring men hope.
The magic of the night began
To tell their horoscope.

The seas had songs for them.
The haunted forest laid aside
Its heathen diadem.

Thou wast the very heart
Of all their quest, and leddest them
By wonder and by art.

And some in wisdom saw,
And some in lovely forms, and some
In visions learned Thy law.

Beauty beset them, bright
From Thy hill-hidden shores, and faint
With Thine unborn delight.

Thine overshadowing
Troubled the mountains, urging forth
The feet of them that sing.

Till, the ardent dream compelling,
For one sweet hour life's final form
Made man himself His dwelling.

And man's content and Thine
Was looked on, talked with, wandered with.
Our very bread and wine

HYMN TO THE SPIRIT

He shared, till they too were
Part of His glory, and His way
As plain as they to share.

Earth's loveliest hour! and then—
O still impossible possible!
O lost desire of men!

So longed for, and when nigh
So utterly rejected, so
Inevitably to die!

O wine of life, that we
Spilled out, how long shall that which is
Kill that which is to be?

Thou, Spirit, Thou alone,
Thou knowest! Therefore grief and joy
Labour in Thee as one.

All separateness, all death,
All life, all fellowship, alike
Burn in us at Thy breath;

Whose quickening we receive
In those unquiet glories drawn
Around the quiet eve;

Whose comfort is to be
Along the coast of life a surf
Incessant as the sea,

HYMN TO THE SPIRIT

Restless forever, till
From those triumphant deeps at last
Thy dream becomes our will,

And we forget no more,
And keep our love, and our Love finds
His children by the shore.

MAIA

TELL me, what is Maia doing? Ah, be still
Thou memory from the hill!
The hedges and their pipings now no bitterness distil.
And careless lads and lasses
That ramble through the passes
And whistle down to silence are gathering their fill,
As seeming free of rue
As once was Maia too.

IMMORTALITY

BEHOLD a marvel!—He that stays
At the utmost fringes of his days,
He only a centre hath always.

Who at his ghostly frontier waits
To open, not to guard his gates
Unto the untimely potentates,

And to their bright invading bands
Makes glad surrender of his lands,
He only unconquerable stands.

Who builds, but sits not on his throne,
Lest the King come, to him alone
The immortal Kingdoms shall be known.

All that we are not, all is ours!
Then make us, you eternal powers,
Your paths, your sentinels, your towers!

MARCHING

WHAT solace has thy scapeless march, O Soul,
From the unchosen to the unknown goal?
What—though thy star beyond the road's end hides
Still, still, until grim faith alone abides—
What keeps thee sure, though visions fail the earth?
What makes thee right, though wither every worth?
This, this alone—let thy proud answer go:
I trust my good because I will it so!
Let God and all His first and best be lies,
Less than His best I in myself despise!
Still let Him hide, year upon broadening year:
The harder He for capture, the more near
My pride shall match Him, till His power take shape
In my pursuing more than His escape!
Till, strengthening so, I see through my dark hours
His own vast glooms; and matched, not with His powers,
But, prouder, with His patience and His pain,
I march the scapeless road again, again,
Till I no longer seek Him, nay, nor find!
But He in triumph sees, Who of old was blind.

AN ODE FOR AN ATHLETE

TRIUMPH I bring, and a song for the lords of the lands and
the sea,
And a cheer for the strength of the strong that brought that
lordship to be.

For the ruddy hearts that make bigger the bounds of an
onsetting race
Till the world be whirled to their vigour, and beat to the
pride of their pace.

For a leaper, a tosser of might, a runner first of the first
When they bend their knees in the light, and hearken, and
rise and burst.

He has brought you the top of the glory of conquering hands
and feet,
He has carved you a cup with a story that none shall hope
to repeat.

Hail to his ways and his days! Thrice hail again and again!
For this is a pæan to praise a prince of the princes of men.

When the kings of the South sank down, and the kingdoms
died in the dust
And Hope was a tree turned brown, and the wheels of the
world were rust;

AN ODE FOR AN ATHLETE

And there grew not anything bold, not anything hardy, no
force;

The gods took scorn of the old, and gave their wills to the
Norse.

The wind and the surf began to crash the rocks with a shout
And there rose a spirit in man, and a thousand hearts leapt
out.

Hearts that were fresh! great hearts! sudden of deeds and
designs

That caught and covered those parts as the drift-snow
covers the pines.

In the might of their hands and feet, and the honour of
arms and of thighs,

They girded them, and were fleet, and the world was fair
for a prize.

They gat them axes and swords, shields and terrible helms;
And launched their barks from the fiords to harry the
sluggard realms.

Oh, they were the chosen ones, in the goodly prancing ships!
The sea was proud of her sons, and kissed them with
masterful lips.

They came to an isle in the West, an isle that was yearning
for men;

They fought, and they were the best, and the isle made
merry again.

AN ODE FOR AN ATHLETE

And slept they slothfully there? or waiting waxed they fat,
To shun the bite of the air, or wither away thereat?

When the runners made ready to run, when the hammers
were held to be hurled,
A new light broke in the sun, a new might woke in the world.

They arose, they kept not still, they made their Britain to be
A lord of a land at will, and they took their rent of the sea.

Fifty horizons before, and they left them all behind,
There was not a brink but they bore their sails to the song
of its wind.

In the lands of night, in the lands of a scalding noon-day
drouth,
By jungles or snows or sands, they have stalked with a
stern-set mouth.

When the Cold cried out in the North, and the Icebergs
shrieked in the tide,
If they could no more march forth they have shovelled
their homes and died.

Their blood is everywhere spilt, it brought ten buds to the
birth;
And ten Great Britains are built to join and stablish the
earth;

AN ODE FOR AN ATHLETE

They are waiting now for the word. Do they loll their arms
and sleep?

They run and the shouts are heard as they hurl the hammers
and leap.

And he, the broad and the tall, the hardy of arm and the
fast,

He has tossed it beyond them all, he has run the best of
them last.

And thrice the Silver has spoken, for thrice in the ripe of the
year

Has he taken the goodly token, the crowning of eyes, and
the cheer.

Oh, legs that were found so fleet! Oh, the arms so sure
with the shot!

Oh, glory of hands and feet, there are no more palms to
be got.

Hail to his deeds and his days! Thrice hail! again and
again!

And shout with a pæan to praise a prince of the princes
of men.

To P.M., 5TH JULY, 1917.

And the word went forth, and the vow led him to the
utter end.

Dear hero of old, how now heroic! dear smile! dear
friend!

THOU ART THE MAN !

ENOUGH! We flash a whit too free
The accusing tempest of our stings.
Truth needs no clamours, rather she
May turn upon our clamourings
And bite more deep than we.

In every street a Kaiser stands:
Whoever held the creed accursed
That of his country's high commands
Her service of herself was first,
This war is at his hands.

Who thought expediency sufficed
To speed his nation to her goal,
Who at a meaner value priced
The human than the patriot soul,
He is this anti-Christ,

Whose loftiest aim was power and place,
Deaf to the inner kingdom's needs;
Who prated of a chosen race
Outstanding from the lesser breeds;
Till God turned back his face.

THOU ART THE MAN!

Nay we, we also wrought the wrong:
All we that unprotesting stood,
We armed the foe, we made him strong;
We, tardy servants of the good,
What are we but one throng?

One throng to suffer one defeat
Ere we for Thee can win the day,
When, one before Thy judgment seat,
Thy broken children, Lord, shall lay
Their kingdoms at Thy feet.

THE SOUL OF BEAUTY

BEAUTY of sight, strange beauty of scent and sound,
Its breath is separation. To and fro
It travails from the fields where sweet-briers grow
Or from the mountains, restless, homeless, bound
For some forgotten, some far holier ground,
Till suddenly, as now, a sunset glow
Points with a shock of meaning, and we know
The soul of beauty is a lost thing found.

That dear circumference of an hundred hills,
Those woods descending, under whose dark shores
These valleys nest the climbing kine, and we
Whose hearts so rarely take our peace—Oh see,
How upon each that rosy secret pours,
And all in one remembering touch fulfils!

ARRAIGNMENT

I SPEAK of Beauty, Beauty that is sad
The more that she is lovely; lovelier
The more that she is sad. I speak of her
Whose guise is all disguise—a cobweb clad
In sunny dew—a sudden haunting had
In a valley of sleeping elms—a gleam, a stir,
A glory, half time's brooding prisoner,
Half timeless joy, too royal to be glad.

And still I say—not we that stand and look
Judge Beauty; but we stand at her assize
And are arraigned by her imperious eyes.
And every rapture is an ageless book
Wherein they are writ who never once forsook
Her summons, or the kingdom where she lies.

THE MAPLES

REMOTE upon a sunny ledge below
Twin banks of cedar in a broad ravine
Three maples front the valley. All between,
Blue shadows and the blazing April snow,
And the black wells of the first waterflow:
Beyond, the hills, vast carpets of pale green
And rocky pits of lavender, serene
And separate as a tale of long ago.

Oh! not the lust of the eyes and the pride of life
This beauty! not the world that passes! not
Its glances! but the deep reminding gaze
Of peace with less than peace ever at strife,
And loveliness that never yet forgot
The discipline that magnifies our days.

THE STRANGER

THERE is a gleam along the river bend
That is not in the river; and within
Each loveliness a stranger. Who would win
The soul of beauty must forever spend
His all to count that stranger as his friend,
His waiting prince, his nearest care and kin,
Shaper and critic, maker, discipline,
His way and star, his journey and its end.

For beauty is no other than the good
Of all the world, claiming and answering
Its want and wonder; often on the road
Unknown, and yet before its vanishing
So near, so still, so fond for all its sting,
Our hearts that burned within us understood.

THE POPLAR

So many times my poplar by the shore
Has reddened in the sunset, and her leaves
Have felt an air no creature else receives,
Dancing to secret music. And my oar
So often passed, yet always I forebore
To ponder on that ritual. Now these eves
Are numbered unto autumn, and the sheaves
Of these communicable hours, the store
Of summer's flaunting, will be garnered soon,
And the last bird be stilled. Then seek, oh seek
The deep exultant source whereof they speak!
That stains their web with colours of its dream,
And even our unconcern can importune
With interruptions, casual yet supreme!

OWNERSHIP

Oh, what a bank! mocking the South with hues
Keener than April's towering canopy!
Crocus and scyllas lapt in green, a sea
Of saffrons, purples, gleaming whites, and blues
Crowding your feet. But stare as you may choose
You cannot make them yours, you cannot be
More than the lover of their mystery,
That giving much, yet so much more refuse.

But you can follow sterner loves than they;
And loyalties far harder to be known;
Beauty still more withholding, lest you stay.
And, at the end, not your stern love alone,
But all the uncaptured hauntings of your day
Shall claim you with one greeting for their own.

FREEDOM

No little, private, casual pursuit
Is freedom, or to be chosen as we please.
Her motions are as ancient as the seas
Around the earth, her ends as absolute.
And still she stays, her grandest voices mute
To our deaf ears, her holiest harmonies
Unheard, save only when some sudden breeze
Brings incense long forgotten, and the acute
Remembering of those green waters far
Beyond our hills, and swift communion then
To join us to our steadfast soul again,
And to the secret beauty whose cool star
Smiles on the sad alternatives of men,
So busy where their waiting treasures are.

TO A MOCKING-BIRD

SURELY that warble has outstripped all need,
And is so lovely for sheer loveliness!
Such ecstasy as we too might express
Were we but outlaws from the human creed
That schools the flood of bounty! But the breed
That most loves freedom, most the days oppress.
What nature takes for nothing we distress
Our lives to earn, and seldom then succeed.

Strange citizens of worlds unreconciled,
Whose nobler joy, when we can heed, outsings
The wilderness, with music yet more wild
And lovely! But whose age-long discipline
Teaches so few to heed, and often clings
So closely that we choke the power within!

THE SURF

INCESSANT as the crowding surf at play
The thoughts of freedom march upon the heart.
Swift as the arrows of the surf that dart
Athwart the sand-bars breaking spray with spray
These thoughts must with your freedom flash away,
The mood of exaltation must depart,
The inner ear be closing, and the mart
Of tangled aims possess your pauseless day.

Yet if this deep division of your thought
No coward will, no mean refusal wrought,
Shame is not due. Our Master may be served
More than one way. 'Tis loyalty He asks,
Rather than anxious choosing of His tasks,
And has a world of service yet reserved.

THE BETRAYAL

THE cause of freedom is twice threatened: those
Betray it first who compass for their state
No noble river bearing up a freight
Of high adventure, but a flood that knows
No purpose but its own, and overflows
Till none can wear against it. Yet to abate
That evil by the fear of being great
Is worse despite; and freedom's equal foes
Are those mean spirits who forever teach
A narrow safety, who abhor the rôle
Of chivalry, and for their country's goal
Not service but a hermitage must preach.
Their waters never to the ocean reach
But stagnate in a marsh that rots the soul.

DEMOCRACY

ARE these your boasts, Democracy, and these?
Having no reverence but to hold in awe
All men's opinion? Hot to make a law
Whenever prudes may fear or prigs may please?
Abject to count the year ill-spent that sees
No novel tyrant, no new pert bashaw
Capped to prescribe your goings, and to draw
The lines around your dearest liberties?

This is no virtue; this is no advance.

This toleration of intolerance

Betrays your faith. There is one Absolute
Alone to serve, and freedom serves Him best,
And patient climbing to His law. The rest,
Oh, for some tonic anger to confute!

A NEW DAY

LOVE, we entreat thee, O Lordly One, come not near to
our roads!

Leave thou the woods and the maidens! And wake them
not with thine odes!

Twenty years and more have we all of us laughed together.
Twenty years have we lingered by water and radiant
weather.

And never a jot we cared for beauty, only to give
Another sisterly grace to the joy that seeks but to live.

But see, we have heard, O Love, that a sadness waits on the
bough

Sooner or later for all! O Love, we have heard it is thou!

And see, we have learned an utterance newly, stupidly soft!
And silence creeps in the fields of our gathering now too oft.

And one there is that has lost the soul that steeps in the
river.

Now he stands by night where star-eyed gossamers quiver.

What! is it thou hast deftly, thou that severest all,
Broken the flock of our peace? Ah, may it never befall!

A NEW DAY

O bring thou not here to the eyes a gleam that is more than
light,

When hardly we know if we love, or only answer the light!

For these are sacred places, and well-remembered abodes.
Therefore, O Love, I entreat thee, keep thou afar from our
roads!

TO ITALY

1918

O THAT Mazzini from his grave could come
To wake the sleeping beauty of your soul,
Italy, unto all our asking dumb,
Though Bissolati calls you to the goal
Of such redemption that no hearth is wronged,
No other hope enslaved, no cause blasphemed,
No outer court with bitter helots thronged
When our true Italy stands forth redeemed.
O that Mazzini, blasting with his scorn
All "sacro egoismo," spoke for you;
Not that mock Dante once to love forsworn,
And now to holiest chivalry untrue,
And to that star men followed to your birth
Shining to-day the only hope of earth!

A CITY SEEN FROM A HEIGHT

ONCE more the all-hoping sun diminished!

And flat beneath the blackened West
Another million crawlings finished

Of nameless hasters faint for rest!
What phœnix did their embers utter?

The hot indignant stars receive
Vain smoke of smothered wills that flutter
Alive and dead from morn to eve!

These clouding into countless days,
They swarming into years on years,

To give how seldom from the maze
Some noble laughter, or nobler tears!

To give, and then again to creep
Blind waves upon a brooding deep!

PRACTICALITY

Oh, we poor creatures, grovelling, forspent!
Whose best ambition, if for one brave season
We see our highest, is to be content
To preach that highest for the lowest reason,
And so to lose it! And to lose the power
To see it! Power that only in courage stands,
And in the pride that serves from hour to hour
One Kingdom only, never made with hands!
Thus reasonable, till we make reason sick
With our safe speech, and practical until
The wheels of doing in that quagmire stick
Past any hope, we face the Sovereign hill
Whose top so soars into the misty sky,
"There is no substance there at all," we cry!

“CANADA FIRST”

STRANGE years ago you grudged to say: “Before
You are citizens or fathers, you are men!”
And we that at your beck laid store to store,
Little had we for our allegiance then.
But that brave day when from beyond your seas
Claims heard you far above your native good,
And gave your instant loyalty to these—
Then felt we first your sovereign Motherhood.
Therefore for these, dear country, found at last,
Spend of our best, and still be strong to spend!
Life, freedom, all our harvest of the past—
What are they but as ransom for that end
In whose sure triumph your true pride disdains
That you should gain save as the whole world gains!

THE MILLENNIUM

AND, after this, what is our faith to find?

For morning what more solid hope have we
Of haven from this shipwreck of mankind,

Who lie at evening chartless on the sea?
Unchanging, unpreparing, halting still,

Oh, what strange magic trust we then to unfold
Glad harvest of the fields we never till,

Fruit of no purpose ever sown of old?
What seek we to repair this piteous time?

What shape we to compel the thing we seek?
Brothers, the good we plan not is the crime

That mothers all this ruin. Ere we speak
Our answer lies within us, and our star:
We have to-morrow what to-day we are.

THE CHOICE

O MY children, wake!
Choose you which you take—
On the right side birchen groves
And leafy fronds for happy loves
Then a dip
And coasts of green
And seamanship
Such a lazy seamanship
Of fire-weed through the ferns between
Choose you this and you shall keep
A joy, a story, and a sleep.

Ah but children, yonder, lo
Very skies of fire-weed glow!
And the stairry lakes lead on
Pine-wards to oblivion
And the hills that no men know!
Only, beyond the hooded aisle
Where the peering cedars wait
And the stealing glooms awhile
Spread a carpet at the gate
Of the utmost silver eve
With a wonder old and lowly
If at last their temple holy
Shall its retinue receive,
There if you too watch the star,
If you send your soul afar,
Many a year shall pass in vain
Ere you shall find your soul again!

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